

As I have said earlier, the Senate will be in session and the House will be in session until midnight. We are prepared to act up until midnight or after, if necessary, to prevent a shutdown of the Federal Government.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair now, under a unanimous-consent agreement, recognizes the Senator from Connecticut.

CUBAN LIBERTY AND DEMOCRATIC SOLIDARITY [LIBERTAD] ACT OF 1995

The Senate continued with the consideration of the message from the House.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I thank the Chair. Let me return to the subject matter that is the pending business of the Senate, but let me also state here in response to the distinguished majority leader, it was our intention that this process do move forward, but also it is our strong feeling this CR ought to be as clean as possible.

There is a place and time to negotiate the budget proposals for 7 years, but we do not believe it ought to be part of a continuing resolution and that extraneous matter included in the CR is really a back-door attempt to achieve through this process efforts which should properly be the subject of negotiations as part of the long-term budget commitments of this country.

So the CR ought to be as clean as possible. As I mentioned earlier, we have only dealt with 4 appropriations bills in the last number of months out of 13 that should come before this body. I think we might better spend our time in dealing with those appropriations bills, get the job done, and then the need for a CR—of course, it becomes unnecessary.

In any event, Mr. President, I am aware our colleague from Massachusetts will be coming to the floor shortly to talk specifically about some of the Medicare proposals.

Allow me to just wrap up my own comments about the matter that is presently before us, and that is the message to the House on the appointment of conferees dealing with the so-called Cuban bill.

I am somewhat mystified as to why this particular bill has such a high priority that we are willing to move almost everything else out of the way to consider it. There is no sense of urgency about it whatsoever. We are moving this bill out of the Foreign Relations Committee while simultaneously holding up nominees to be Ambassadors and critically important treaties that ought to come before this.

Frankly, when you consider a sense of urgency, not to have United States representation in the People's Republic of China, Pakistan, Indonesia, seems to be an issue that ought to be dealt with immediately, rather than putting that on a back burner and dealing with this bill, which most people think will have absolutely no effect whatsoever on the

Government in Cuba. It will complicate our relationships with Russia, with the New Independent States, and others, given the fact that we link our aid to those nations and our arms control efforts based on whether or not they provide any assistance to Cuba. That ought not be the way we deal with the fragile democracies in Russia and in the New Independent States.

So, for those reasons, I feel it is worthwhile to focus some attention on this and to try to bring the attention of the U.S. Senate back to a discussion of what ought to be the subject matter for debate and discussion today, and that is the priorities of our overall budget for this country and why it is we cannot seem to get a clean debt ceiling extension in a CR that is devoid of extraneous matter, and then get to the business of negotiating on the budget over the next 7 years but not tying up those two matters with matters that have no business being there at all.

With that, I ask the Chair to tell me what the pending business of the Senate is.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The present order of business is to recognize the Senator from Massachusetts for pending business. And at that point we are going to resume H.R. 2491.

The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

Mr. DODD. I gather the Senator from Massachusetts [Mr. KENNEDY], may be a bit delayed. He should be here momentarily.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Minnesota.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Maimon Cohen, who is a fellow working with me, be allowed to be on the floor for the duration of the debate on this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE 7-YEAR BALANCED BUDGET RECONCILIATION ACT OF 1995

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, let me be clear that Senator KENNEDY will be on the floor with his motion. I am actually not making a motion. But what I thought I would do is take a little bit of time to talk about one provi-

sion in the motion. That is something that I have worked on, and I want to speak a little bit about that.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I just ask that maybe we keep track of the time because we are on a time limit. So this time might be assigned to the block of time which will be used for consideration of this motion, if that is part of the agreement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. I want to inform the Senator from Minnesota that the Senator from Massachusetts will have a total of 40 minutes on this motion.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I have been allotted 10 minutes. So I will be pleased to lock that block of time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, this time is taken from the time of the Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Chair. Before I proceed, could I make sure? I ask the Chair to please notify me if I should go over 10 minutes, because I do not want to take any more time than that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is allotted 10 minutes.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, let me just talk about one provision in this motion to instruct conferees that Senator KENNEDY is going to be making. This is a provision that I worked on, which essentially says that the Congress shall be instructed to delete provisions that provide greater or lesser Medicaid spending in States based upon the votes needed for the passage of the legislation rather than the needs of the people in those States.

What I am essentially saying here is that what happened a couple of weeks ago in the dark of night was that the U.S. Senate exchanged Medicaid money for votes. What I am saying in this provision in this instruction to the conferees is that when we develop a formula for allocating Medicaid—or what we call in Minnesota medical assistance funds—it ought to be based upon some rational policy choice. It ought to be based upon the needs of the people in the States. It ought not to be based on some kind of a deal which is all based upon the number of votes to pass a particular piece of legislation.

From my State, on this Friday night in about 3 hours we went from seeing a cut of \$2.4 billion to a cut of \$2.9 billion. In other words, the State of Minnesota lost \$500 million.

Mr. President, we need to understand that in the State of Minnesota altogether the projected cuts on Medicare and medical assistance are going to be somewhere between \$7 billion and \$8 billion.

So the concern that I have—and the reason that I am working with Senator KENNEDY on this, and so much appreciate his instruction to conferees—it seems to me that it is outrageous for the U.S. Senate to make decisions on allocation of medical assistance funds to States based upon some sort of